Mitchell, Charles Hamilton

Dec. 1916-June 1917

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Headquarters,
Second Army.

December 7 1916

My dear President Falconer

Just to add a more personal word to my Christmas wishes to you and Mrs Falconer. As we have now passed the second mile stone of the year since the war started I realise that I have been a long time away from Canada and my people — though of course my wife and her mother are in England and that is home for the present. But I am

for an hour or so — well it may be soon again, God willing, but at the present outlook it must be easily a year and may be two. To visualise this at such a distance in time and space is not easy so one has to sit down and wait and work hard to bring it about, harder than ever. But at all events we cannot help being impressed with the wonderful resource and staying power of the enemy. This good thing that we have the consciousness that we can match him and more than match him.

This started out to be a real

Christmas letter but I fear I have dropped into rather military shop. This all by the way of reviewing the year as one does at this time and of thinking of the next.

Your letters and those of many other friends about the University have been a source of great pleasure to me the past year and I want to take this opportunity to thank you for these and other thoughts.

With very best Christmas wishes to you and Mrs Falconer, to which my wife and Mrs Stanton have asked me to add theirs

Yours sincerely
C. H. Mitchell

commencing to look for signs which long absence makes evident sometimes. I am glad to say however that the memories of those at home and the things and places which were part of my life there are still a part of my self here and of my frequent thoughts and these I take to be good signs. The University is one of those which stands large in my mental picture and how often have I thought I would like to again walk about its park and see the familiar faces and places – if only

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Headquarters,
Second Army.

6th December 1916.

President R.A. FALCONER, C.M.G.
The University of Toronto,
Toronto,
CANADA.

My dear President FALCONER,

Your personal letter of the 21st October gave me the keenest pleasure by your good words about my recent promotion here, and I thank you very much for the opinion you have expressed.

The question you have asked me with respect to the Deanship in Applied Science came as a genuine surprise, and it is difficult to express to you my very great appreciation of the honour you have done me in asking it. No graduate of the University of Toronto could be more greatly honoured than in this manner, especially under the circumstances. To be asked to follow such distinguished men as Dean Ellis and the late Dean Galbraith, both so dear to us all, has touched me very deeply indeed. At this distance and at this time, as I sit in a little ancient town in Northern France in the fighting line, it has

been.....

been hard to secure the proper perspective to consider the matter, and this must be my excuse for the time which has elapsed since receiving your letter.

As to my future after the war is over, if I am spared, I have hoped to resume my practice; I have had no thought of remaining in the Army, even if asked to do so. My professional career, which I have felt was reasonably successful, I have hoped to continue feeling that my duty, if it may be so considered, lies with the development of Canada, in which, as an engineer, I will always be proud to have a part.

Now you ask me to leave my practice and my hopes for this career, and to devote myself to a University career. What I have been really considering is how nearly related these two careers may be. If the two can run reasonably side by side, then my answer is that the proposal you make does appeal to me, and very much so, for, as you know, I am keenly interested in the University and especially in the Faculty of Applied Science, and

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Headquarters,
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would be willing and anxious to make its success the first object of my efforts and energies. On the other hand, if by turning to the University career I must wholly relinquish my practice and the attractions of its professional future, then the University career will not appeal to me.

The element of uncertainty as to the termination of the war, and my own fortune in coming through it, must, of course, govern the whole matter. It is good of you to put the question in the form you do - "is there any use in waiting for you" - as I can see that you realize we all take equal chances. But if you decide that the condition which I make is not opposed to the principle of the appointment, and if you ask me to accept it, I will set about making such preparation as I can under the circumstances for taking up the appointment when opportunity offers.

Yours very sincerely,

C. Whitehead

ing in in command: there are many on the faculty who were professors and lecturers when I was a student!

In general I would hope to have a free hand to carry on the policy of my predecessors and especially of the late Dean Galbraith in whom we all had such great confidence. In saying this however I recognize of course that altered circumstances may lay conditions on the situation which we cannot now foresee.

Again thanking you very much for the confidence you have indicated in making me the proposal — a confidence which I honestly feel I do not merit,

I remain
Yours very sincerely
C H Mitchell

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Board

Headquarters,
Second Army.

December 6 1916

My dear President Falconer

When writing the answer to your inquiry whether I would care to enter the University career I avoided going into details but it occurs to me that there are several points which I thought I touched upon so that you may more clearly know my view point.

It will naturally occur to you to ask to what extent I might wish to employ my time in connection with my practice. This of course impossible to make any definite suggestion as much would depend upon circumstances

from time to time but I should think that if I did not devote more than a third of my time during the session to my practice it would be not an unreasonable allotment of time. I would expect of course to be able to utilize a portion of my summer holidays as well. It must be borne in mind in this connection that a very considerable advantage must accrue to the University by having the Dean of such a faculty in close touch with practice in the professional world. Under all circumstances I would wish it to be clearly understood that the extent to which I would devote my time and energy to my practice would entirely conform to your wishes so as not to be detrimental

to the interests of the University for, as I said in my letter, my first thought must be for the success of the Faculty.

I do not wish to discuss the financial side except to say that I assume the Dean's salary will continue to be at least as much as at present.

Other questions of course occur to me which you must have considered but I must say I do feel rather delicate about two points, these are: the fact that I at present have a seat on the Board of Governors although after the period of patience I presume there could be no criticism. The other is the possible attitude of the present members of the Faculty about an outsider – one of their own students – com

January 18th, 1917

Lieutenant-Colonel C. P. Mitchell,

Headquarters Staff, 2nd Army,

B. E. F. France.

Dear Colonel Mitchell:

I am very glad to know that there is a prospect of your being willing to accept the Deanship of the Faculty of Applied Science. I read your letters to the Board at its meeting on Thursday and stated that if you took the position you would want to be allowed to do some private practice, which would occury a third of your time in the winter and a large portion of your time during the summer.

The Board recognise that in order to get a man who is suitable to fill such a position they must make such a concession, and in fact in some ways it would be an advantage. I am sure also that the salary would be at least no less than that which Dr. Galbraith received during the latter part of his life.

The members of the Board I know regard with great satisfaction the possibility of your accepting the offer. The place needs just such activity and intelligence for its development as you have displayed and for which you have received such recognition during the course of the war. I do not believe that any criticism could be brought against you owing to the fact that you are a member of the Board of Governors. This whole matter was arranged during your absence.

As to the staff, from inquiries which I have made from them individually during the last two years, I believe that there is no one whom the majority of them would welcome more than yourself. Dean Ellis is of opinion that no better appointment could be made.

Also, I have spoken to a great many of the graduates, both here and in the United States, and I am confident that the old graduates would be gratified that so competent a graduate would have been found for the position.

I cannot vouch for every member of the staff, because there may be individuals who might prefer some one else, but this I think would be inevitable in any case.

My own judgment is that the appointment would be welcomed on all sides.

Dr. Ellis is willing to hold the position until the end of the war, or as long as his strength will permit him, but he is getting feeble, and we would like to have the position filled as soon as possible on the immediate close of the war.

Please give Mrs. Mitchell my kind regards, and believe me,

Yours sincerely,

President.

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June 22nd, 1917

Lt.-Colonel C. H. Mitchell,

Headquarters, Second Army,

B. E. F., France.

My dear Colonel Mitchell:

Just a line to acknowledge your letter and to congratulate you on the C.M.G. I was greatly pleased at this recognition that has come to you. I hoped that by this time you would have been made a full colonel, and it may be the next thing we shall hear of.

I assume that you were in the region of the last attack on the Messines Ridge, because as far as I can make out it was carried through by the Second Army. Your account of Vimy was most interesting. I have had the opportunity of a long talk with Colonel Philip who was through the attack. I have also heard from others who were in it. It must have been a splendid piece of work.

We are here in the throes of great political excitement. There seems to be no doubt that conscription will go through, but that there will be a great break of parties. My own conviction is that both sides have played party too long. I think that two years ago if they had dropped partyism and had begun to educate the country including Quebec with regard to the gravity of the situation, the people would have been ready to do their duty now. However, it must go through, though I am afraid it will mean unnecessary

opposition which might have been avioded. For the past few months we have been standing still and everything needs to be begun again as to the necessity of sacritice both of men and of money.

With kind regards, I am,

Yours sincerely,

President.